

A PROTEST

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Against the Efforts now being made in Canada

BY THE

ROMAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY

TO PUT INTO PRACTICE AMONG HER MAJESTY'S
PROTESTANT SUBJECTS

The Doctrines of the Syllabus and the Vatican.

BY

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A PROTEST.

THE design of the following pages is to oppose and protest against the efforts now being made by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy of Quebec to impose upon those belonging to their communion the extreme doctrines of the Italian ecclesiastical school. Considering the solidarity of interest which necessarily exists between Protestants and Catholics in Canada, living together in the same country, owning a common allegiance, and enjoying equal rights, it follows that nothing can occur affecting the welfare of one without materially influencing the future fortunes of all.

I.

Has the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards civil society changed since Confederation; and has such change been signalized in Lower Canada by overt action?

The Confederation of the British North American Provinces was proclaimed on the 1st July, 1867, and the antecedent discussions may be definitively stated to have commenced at the Charlottetown Conference, in September, 1864.

The Syllabus Errorum was issued by the authority of Pope Pius IX., on 8th December, 1864.

The Vatican Council met at Rome on the 8th Dec., 1869. And the celebrated dogmatic Decrees were promulgated on the 18th July, 1870.

It is therefore evident that if the Syllabus and the Vatican Decrees have in any way altered the relations of the Church of Rome towards civil society, the first division of the question must be answered affirmatively.

This, I think, will easily be granted, in view of the manner in which

these extraordinary dogmas have been regarded in the principal countries of Europe. From what has taken place, and is now taking place in Europe, I consider the conclusion inevitable: that the Syllabus and Vatican Decrees have materially altered the relations of the Church of Rome towards civil society, and grievously disturbed the mind and conscience of both Catholic and Protestant.

But how far has Canada, and especially the Province of Quebec, been affected by these momentous decrees?

There is no doubt that for many years, even prior to the publication of the Syllabus, a new ecclesiastical element obtruded itself into the Roman Catholic clerical body in Lower Canada. The peaceful, loyal, modest, intelligent priest, who, in almost a patriarchal spirit, had directed the consciences of a simple peasantry, began to find his domain invaded by the more active and energetic spirit of the Ultramontane. The Bishops were brought more directly under the control of the Sacred College, vacancies in the Episcopate were filled with men more suited to the requirements of Rome, greater development was given to the establishment of religious bodies, and the control of education, both in its higher and inferior branches, was sought to be placed in the hands of the priesthood.

But until after the promulgation of the Vatican Decrees—that is, long subsequent to the date of Confederation—no pretension of interference in civil matters was put forth beyond the legitimate influence which no one desires to deny to the clergy of all persuasions, in their character of citizens. Can it, with any truth, be said that this state of things exists to-day?

At the fifth Provincial Council of the Hierarchy, held at Quebec in 1873 (approved by the Pope in September, 1874), among many other decreta affecting the conduct of the "faithful," I find the following judgment upon the relations of the Roman Catholic Church towards the State:—

"We assert that the Church is a perfect society, independent of the Civil power and superior to it. Between the religious authority of this society (the fulness of which authority resides in the Roman Pontiff) and the political power of the Christian ruler there exists, from the very nature of things, such a relation that the latter is to the former not only negatively but also positively subordinate, although indirectly so. The Civil power can do nothing which tends to the injury of the Church, and ought to abstain from such acts as would clash with the laws of the Church, and, indeed, should also, at the request of the Church, co-operate towards its benefit and the attainment of its supernatural ends. This is the true doctrine of Boniface the Eighth, in the Bull *Unam Sanctam*, in which he teaches that the material sword should be subordinate to the spiritual sword, and should be used for the Church, but not against the Church. The opinion of the Fathers is the same, who write that the Civil power has been instituted by God for the protection and care of the Church."

Following out the idea contained in the above decretum, Mgr. Bourget, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Montreal, says, in his Pastoral of 5th May, 1875, just before the local elections for the Province of Quebec:—

“EIGHTH RULE—*Who are those who ought not to be voted for?*

“Assuredly, our very dear brethren, those do not deserve your suffrages who show themselves hostile to religion and to the Divine principles which it teaches; who advance and maintain in their speeches and writings errors which the Church condemns; who refuse their curés the right to give instructions with regard to the conscientious duties devolving upon the candidates as well as the electors, pretending that they ought not in any way to mix themselves up in elections; who support doctrines which are condemned by the Syllabus; who oppose all intervention by the Pope, bishop, or priest in the affairs of the Governments, as if the Governments were not subject to the principles that God has revealed to the Church for the good government of the people; who presume to think that the Church has nothing to do with political questions, and that she errs when she meddles with them; who criticise and blame the pastorals and circulars of the bishops, and the instruction of pastors, relative to elections; who do not fear to say that the priests ought to remain secluded in the Church and the sacristy, and who organize themselves to prevent them, if they can, from teaching sound political principles, such as the Church herself teaches; who dare to predict that the priests will be persecuted, ill-treated, imprisoned, and exiled in Canada, as they are in Germany and other countries, if they continue, as they are doing, to engage in elections.”

Again, Mgr. Bourget, in his pastoral, read at all the churches on Sunday, 4th April, 1875, proscribes the *Montreal Witness*, and denounces spiritual penalties and disabilities here and hereafter against all who should subscribe for or even read that paper.

In another pastoral letter of 3rd October, 1875, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Montreal says, in reference to the law as laid down by Her Majesty's Privy Council:—

“The *Gallican liberties*, which have been (in the Guibord case) appealed to, being now considered even in France as real servitudes which deprived the Church of her legitimate liberties, cannot be set up as giving any one the authority here in Canada to encroach upon the rights of the Holy Church.

“It is to the Church alone to decide whether the decrees of the Council of Trent are or are not binding in any particular country.

“Allow us, in conclusion, to observe, our very dear brethren, that this decision (judgment about the burial of Guibord) might not have been given if the Noble Lords who compose the Privy Council and advise Her Majesty could have been able to assure

themselves that it would tend strangely to grieve the bishops of this country."

The same Bishop, in his pastoral letter of 1st February, 1876, caps the climax by declaring, "Each one of you can and ought to say in the interior of his soul, 'I hear my curé, my curé hears the bishop, the bishop hears the Pope, and the Pope hears our Lord Jesus Christ, who aids with His Holy Spirit to render them infallible on the teaching and government of His Church.'"

Listen now to the voice of these infallible curés during the elections of Messrs. Langeirn and Tremblay.

The curé of Mulbaie said, "That although it was true that Mr. Tremblay was a perfectly honest man, and capable of rendering great services to his country, he nevertheless supported a dangerous party. I shall read to you next Sunday the pastoral letter of the bishops, and after that those who wish to lose their souls may lose them."

The curé of St. Hilarion declared, "That it was a grievous mortal sin to vote for Mr. Tremblay, and that at the hour of death the electors would rather have followed the banner of the Pope than that of Victor Emmanuel and Garibaldi."

The curé of Ste. Fidèle said, "That whosoever should vote for Mr. Tremblay would be guilty of a grievous sin, and that, should he die after having so voted, he would have no right to the ministry of a priest."

The clerical member-elect was unseated by the Superior Court of Quebec. Judge Tachereau, who gave the judgment in that contestation, said, "That a cause identical in its character had been decided by the unanimous judgment of three eminent judges of the Superior Court of the Province of Quebec, professing the Catholic religion, and that such a decision had created a precedent of a high authority; but the judge added, that it was no less true that an eminent member of the Canadian episcopacy had thought fit to comment on that judgment, to blame it severely, and to declare as contrary to the Catholic faith the principles of law invoked by those honourable judges." In fact, the Bishop of Rimouski launched a pastoral at these three Catholic judges who had united in unseating a clerical member-elect of Parliament, declaring that neither Parliament nor the Bench could interfere in matters wrought by the Church, and ordering the sacraments to be withheld from any Catholic asserting or acting to the contrary. The late judgment of Judge Tachereau, which repudiates the doctrine of ecclesiastical immunity, has been condemned by his own brother, the Archbishop of Quebec. *The Nouveau Monde* (March 14, 1877), the official organ of the priests, says that the Church "for eighteen centuries has claimed, and proclaims yet, the doctrine of ecclesiastical immunity," and that Judge Tachereau's judgment "will never be accepted as a faithful interpretation of our constitution and our laws."

The foregoing quotations are merely selections from a mass of

documentary evidence produced since 1870, which conclusively proves that the course adopted is not the caprice of one over-zealous prelate, but the deliberate policy of the whole Hierarchy; and it is to be observed that the entire body of proof thus furnished bears date subsequently to 1870, and the most aggressive portion within the last two years—all being long after Confederation, and much the greater part since my own retirement from public life in 1872. I conceive, therefore, I was fully justified in writing my letter of 31st May, 1875, to the Hon. J. G. Robertson, and in using the following language:—

“On my return from the West, I am much concerned to observe the attitude taken by the Ultramontane party, not only towards liberal Roman Catholics, but also towards us Protestants. I refer more immediately to the manifesto by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Montreal, but remotely, though not less directly, to the ecclesiastical pressure which has been put upon the press of the country, and the claim advanced, with ever-increasing arrogance, to the right of the Roman Catholic Church and its Hierarchy to control and direct the scope of political action and public law within the Province of Quebec, treating it as their own peculiar domain, and regarding us as strangers and aliens, holding no status of our own, but simply tolerated in their midst.”

The extracts given prove in the most authentic manner possible, that the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec extends its demands—

- (1.)—To the general assertion of ecclesiastical over civil authority.
- (2.)—To positive interference with both voters and candidates in the elections.
- (3.)—To the exercise of proscription against the press.
- (4.)—To the condemnation of freedom of speech, in opposition to the judgment of the Privy Council.
- (5.)—To the extraordinary proposition that the Divine assistance claimed to be given to the Pope alone, when speaking *ex cathedra* on “faith and morals,” descends with undiminished force to the bishops, priests, and curés.

Such are the doctrines laid down by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy in Quebec, and it is notorious that in many instances they have been acted upon. But better than a hundred special cases is the present attitude of both ordinary political parties towards the priesthood, and the evident conviction in the minds of their leaders that victory will rest with the party favoured by the Roman Catholic Church.

I hold that, knowing as we now do the extreme scope that may be given, and, in fact, is given in Quebec to the claims of the Church of

Rome, it constitutes a legitimate cause for apprehension and distrust, when we perceive the local government of our province passing completely under the influence of the Hierarchy. With the immense range of power given by the Act of Confederation to the local legislatures, covering the whole body of Civil law, it is of most serious import to us to learn that the maintenance of all our Civil rights is henceforward to be entrusted to a body of men who are taught that the Pope is supreme, and that all human enactments are subject to his revision whenever he may please to pronounce that they fall within the charmed circle of "faith and morals." Passing, however, from the general to the particular, we observe that free thought and free speech have been anathematized in the case of the Institut Canadien, and its member, the late Joseph Guibord. The press has been placed under ecclesiastical ban in the case of the *Montreal Witness*, and in ominous warnings to other French Canadian journals. The clergy have also succeeded in drawing under their own control the expenditure of most of the public money voted for charities, reformatories, and asylums, also for colonization; and, in the case of education, have obtained, last session, the entire management of this most important subject, as regards Roman Catholics. The influence already exerted over the consciences of the simple and trustful French-Canadian peasantry is already most marked, and we may readily conjecture what it will become when the education of the masses is all entrusted to the same hands. Power is now given to the Roman Catholic bishops to divide the whole province into ecclesiastical parishes; and we know that this is being done irrespective of, and, in many instances, against the wishes of the Roman Catholic parishioners. The action of the Privy Council in relation to Guibord has been provided against in the future, by legislation obtained this year—giving full control of burials to the clergy. And probably, for the first time within any British province, the authority of a foreign potentate is cited as necessary for the due execution of the law: the Quebec Act, 38 Vic., cap. 29, respecting the action of certain parishes at Montreal, contains the following extraordinary clause:—

"3.—Each parish thus recognised is so recognised subject to the provision contained in the decree of erection relating to it, *as amended by the Holy See*, and published in 1874 in such parish."

And the marginal note in the Statute is significant of the future.

"*Decrees amended by our Holy Father the Pope are binding.*"

These points do not relate to Roman Catholics only; they have a most important influence on every British subject in Quebec. This course of action is not ephemeral, and will not pass away with the lives of one or two very aged men, as may be seen by the careful perusal of Abbé Paquet's Lectures on "Liberalism," delivered at the Laval University, in 1874, and approved by the Archbishop. The course of teaching in the first Roman Catholic university in Quebec,

is of the most extreme description, and inculcates obedience to the Church of Rome in respect to every condemnation of Civil rights and Civil government contained in the Syllabus.

Therefore, with the course of events in the Province of Quebec before us, my question must be answered in the affirmative. "*The attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards society has changed since Confederation, and such change has been signalized in Lower Canada by overt action.*"

II.

Has such change affected the general rights of Protestants as citizens of Quebec, and especially weakened their guarantees obtained at Confederation?

There is scarcely a subject that can be named that does not fall more or less directly within the scope of the Local Legislature, and as citizens of Quebec, the Protestants have, therefore, good reason for jealous apprehension at the encroachments of the Hierarchy. It is not sufficient for their re-assurance to be told these measures concern Roman Catholics only, and that they may repose in security upon the guarantees obtained at the completion of Confederation.

These guarantees were obtained under a totally different state of public affairs from that which exists now; and, being intended as a protection for the faith and liberties of the minority against possible wrong to be sustained at the hands of the Roman Catholics, it becomes of essential importance to recognise the serious change that has been wrought in the Church of Rome through the publication of the Syllabus and the promulgation of the Vatican Decrees. Responsible as I was, in a great measure, for the sufficiency of these guarantees, I claim that no blame can fairly attach to me for not foreseeing the attitude the Church of Rome was in a few years to assume, and the consequent extent to which the precautionary measures might prove inadequate.

The Protestant guarantees are three in number:—Education, Representation, and the Veto power reserved in the hands of the Federal Government at Ottawa.

EDUCATION.

The only status which we are guaranteed under the Imperial Act of Confederation is that existing at its passage. Now, it is well

known that this was wholly unsatisfactory to the Protestants, especially in Montreal and Quebec; and an endeavour to pass the requisite amendments made in the last session of the Canadian Parliament was defeated. So important did I regard this defeat, that I resigned my seat in the Government, and declined any other share of responsibility than was accepted by other Protestant representatives. However, as it threatened to interpose most serious obstacles to the acceptance of Confederation, it was finally agreed to be satisfied with the assurances of Sir George Cartier and the French Canadian Roman Catholics following him, that at the first session of the Local Legislature of Quebec the required legislation should be obtained, and that the Local Government should be so organized as to ensure this result. Though not a member of the Government, I formed one of the delegation to London, and assisted in the compilation of the Act of Confederation; and, on the 1st February, 1867, when Confederation took place, I re-entered the Ministry, and, with the assistance of Sir George Cartier and the Hon. Mr. Langwin, the School Bill, as it now stands, was passed; but even then it was not attained without great difficulty, as can be testified by all who were acting with me in Quebec at the time.

The educational rights of Protestants as respects much of the principle and mode of taxation, separate management, and other important points, are, therefore, *not secured* by the Act of Confederation, but rest upon a provincial statute of Quebec, that is subject to repeal if not prevented by the *veto power*.

REPRESENTATION.

The representation guarantees enjoyed by the Protestants were of a most illusory nature, and liable to be disturbed by natural causes. But in what position do they now stand?

Under the guise of re-patriation, large sums of money have been annually voted, and the most persistent efforts made for the purpose of filling our reserved constituencies with French Canadian Roman Catholics whenever an opening could be found or made.

Already our hold on these constituencies is so weakened that, with one or two exceptions, the candidate receiving the Roman Catholic vote will always secure his election. And when the day arrives that Mgr. Bourget's dogma prevails as to "who are those who are not to be voted for," it will be seen that our guarantee is gone. One session, with an obedient majority from the guaranteed constituencies, will be sufficient to recast the boundaries of each and all, and scatter to the winds this one of our impregnable securities, *unless*, as in the case of the Education law, the *veto power* be exercised.

VETO POWER.

We have the guarantee that all local legislation is subject to revision and veto by the Governor-General, or rather, to speak more practically and intelligibly, by the Federal Government.

The veto by the Federal Government is the real palladium of our Protestant liberties in Lower Canada. I have already shown that our educational rights are only safe under its shelter, and that our representation guarantee will some day "dissolve into thin air" without its exercise. But it is negative only; and if the opportunity for its exercise be lost, it is impotent to remedy the evil.

If nothing be heard but adulatory pæans to the hierarchy to obtain their political support and influence, how can we expect to receive attention when we appeal to a Government at Ottawa, almost all of whose supporters from Quebec owe their seats to the clergy, and of whose opponents a like proportion are also hopelessly entangled?

What chance of getting the veto exercised if nine-tenths of the Quebec votes are ready to declare want of confidence in the Government that ventures to do it, and what else could the nine-tenths do in their position?

I might extend this argument much more, and support it by a variety of facts drawn from the legislation and administration of affairs in Quebec since 1870, but I prefer taking only those striking points with which we are in a great measure familiar, and comparing the position of Quebec now with what it was prior to the Syllabus and Vatican Decrees, I unhesitatingly affirm that "*such change has affected the general rights of Protestants as citizens of the Province of Quebec, and especially has weakened their guarantees obtained at Confederation.*"

Let not our sister provinces wrap themselves up in indifference; they will soon learn that what injures Quebec injures them, and that agitation and discord here means trouble and disturbance at their own doors. It would ill become a man of my years and experience, even if it suited my taste, to use the language of menace, but I may fittingly employ words of entreaty and warning; and I therefore do, in the most earnest manner, pray for such sympathy and help as will arrest the designs of those who are now troubling us. One thing is certain, that the rest of the Dominion cannot allow Quebec to become the seat of chronic agitation and disorder, to the injury and danger of the other members of the Confederation. If this struggle is allowed to extend and intensify, then the day which sees the triumph of the priest will usher in that which will overthrow his power for ever. It is impossible that in a province of the Protestant Empire of Great Britain on the continent of America, in the presence

of forty millions of Protestants, a slavery should be imposed upon us by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, which exists no longer even under the shadow of the Vatican. Free speech, free thought, and a free press must have the fullest scope in America; and if in a wild scheme to reduce them to obedience to the will of the priesthood they be for the moment repressed, all history tells us that the torrent, when it bursts, will sweep away far more than the barrier that arrested its course.

The above is an abbreviation (two or three facts excepted) of a pamphlet, entitled "Church and State," by Sir A. T. GALT, K.C.M.G., published in Montreal, 1876. Any one desiring more information, may apply to the Rev. J. J. ROX, 9, Serjeants' Inn, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

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